

Wilson Votes to Protect Medicare Recipients from Higher Premiums

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) voted today to protect seniors and people with disabilities from unfair increases in their 2010 Medicare Part B premiums. H.R. 3631, the Medicare Premium Fairness Act, overwhelmingly passed the U.S. House of Representatives 406-18.

Under current law, for nearly three-quarters of Medicare enrollees, their Medicare Part B premiums—which covers physician and outpatient care and is deducted from Social Security checks—cannot increase more than the cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security. Due to the recession, the Social Security COLA for next year is set at zero. Without today's congressional action, the other 27% of enrollees (11 million seniors) would have seen their Part B premium increase from \$96 per month to \$110-120 per month, because Part B premiums are required by law to cover Medicare Part B's costs.

The Medicare Premium Fairness Act would extend the “hold harmless” policy to protect all Medicare enrollees from what would essentially be a cut to their monthly income. Because of this legislation, 2010 Part B premiums will remain at \$96.40 and there will be no change to the bottom line of seniors' Social Security checks.

“Many of the seniors within my District rely on Medicare Part B to make ends meet. We should not be cutting their monthly income, and this bill ensures that they won't see a decrease in their Social Security checks,” Wilson said.